

Ballard Takes His Case To City Streets

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WIBC

Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard continues to plead his case for the proposed sale of the city's water and sewer utilities.

Ballard Tuesday pushed his administration's plan in front of one of the abandoned homes he says the deal with Citizens Energy Group will help fix.

During his speech near 30th and Martin Luther King Jr. Streets, he claimed \$425 million will go directly toward rebuilding ailing infrastructure in every portion of the city.

"The transfer of utilities to Citizens Energy is a transformational project, one that will enable us to address hundreds of millions of dollars in critical infrastructure needs."

That large sum has raised some controversy because it would be paid by sewer customers. Still, Ballard said he is getting widespread support for the transfer from residents and community leaders.

"From listening to residents at the public forums and Mayor's Night Out meetings, we heard a resounding need for critical infrastructure improvements, including increased focus on addressing unsalvageable abandoned homes."

If the deal goes through, the city hopes to knock down about 115 abandoned homes it has the legal authority to demolish and 2,000 others.

Ultimately, it's up to the City-County Council and Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission to approve the transfer. Ballard is hopeful the deal will be finalized by the end of the year.

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